

Haftarah - Parshat Va Era (Ezekiel 28-25 to 29-21)

based on the translations of

Robert Alter, Aryeh Kaplan, Stone Edition Tanach, JPS, Jerusalem Bible, New King James Bible

modeled after the recording in *Navigating the Bible II*:

<https://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=2&chapter=28&verse=25&portion=16>

28:25 [These are the words that were spoken] by [the Lord *Elohim*] (YHWH): “[When I gather in] | the house of Israel [from the peoples] of whom [they are scattered] [among them], I will be hallowed through them in the eyes of the nations. [They will dwell] [in their own land]—the land I gave to My servant Jacob.

26 They will [surely dwell within it], [with full confidence].

[They will build] houses, and they [will plant vineyards], [and live there] securely, [after I] [have executed judgments] on all [who have contempt] for them, all around them, and they shall know [that it is true] that I am YHWH [their God].”

29:1 It happened in year the tenth, [in the tenth month], on the twelfth day of the month: there came the word of YHWH to me, saying:

2 “[Thou son of man]: You [must set your face] [against Pharaoh] king of Egypt, and prophecy [concerning him], [and concerning Egypt] in general.

3 You will speak, and say to him, [This is what is said] | by [the Lord *Elohim*], “[Be aware]: [I am against you], Pharaoh [king of Egypt], that serpent—the great crocodile, sprawling in the midst of its channels— [this is] [the one who says], ‘Mine is the Nile; it is I who made it.’

4 [I am going] to put hooks [through your jaws] and there shall cling the fish of the channels to your scales.

[I will haul you up] from out of your channels. And all the fish of the channels—[to your scales] [they will cling].

5 [I will leave you] [in the wilderness]—both you and all the fish of your channels. [On the face] of the field you will fall.

[You will not be gathered] [or taken up] [to be buried].

Unto [the beasts of the earth], and to the birds of the heavens, I will give you to be eaten.

29:6 [Then will know] all the dwellers of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) that indeed I am YHWH,
[because of the fact] [that they have been] a staff made of reeds, to *Beit Yisrael*.
7 [When they grasped] you by the hand, [they would shatter], tearing among them every shoulder.
[When they leaned] [upon you], you were broken, causing them to be shaky, [in all their legs].”
8 [Therefore hear this]: This is the word of the Lord *Elohim*, “[Be ye apprised]: I will bring upon you the sword,
and cut off from among you, both man and beast.
9 [Then will be] [*Eretz Mitzrayim*] (the land of Egypt) desolation and ruin, [and they will know] [that I am] YHWH,
[all this because] [he said these words]: ‘The Nile is mine; it is I who have made it.’
10 [Therefore know this]: I am against you, [and all of your channels],
[and I will reduce] *Eretz Mitzrayim* into ruins, [into ground parched] and desolate,
from Migdal to Syene, and to the border of Cush (Ethiopia).
11 [There shall not] [pass through it] the foot of a human; the foot of an animal will not [pass that way].
It shall be not be settled, for forty years.
12 [I will make] [of this land]—‘I’ll make *Mitzrayim* a desolation [in the midst of all] | the lands [that are desolations].
[Their cities] among cities [that are ruined] shall be desolation for forty years.
I will scatter the Egyptians [among the nations], [and disperse them] [throughout the peoples].”
13 [For indeed], thus says the Lord *Elohim*,
“[At the end] of forty years I will gather the Egyptians [from the peoples] where I had dispersed them.
14 [I will return] the captivity of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros—the land of their birth.
[There they will be] a kingdom most lowly.
15 [Of all the kingdoms] it will be the lowliest, not to be raised up again, over the nations.
[I will diminish them]. [No more] will she rule over nations.
16 [And she will] [never again] be to the house of Israel their assurance, recalling their iniquity [by their turning] [to follow them].
Then they will know that I indeed am the Lord *Elohim*.”

29:17 [And it came to pass] in the twenty and seventh year, [in the first month], on the first of the month,
there came the word of YHWH to me saying,
18 [O thou son of man], Nebuchadnezzar [the king of Babylonia]
pressed into service his army, [and they labored] greatly [against Tyre].
Every head [has gone bald], [and every shoulder] was scraped.
[But as for any profit], [there was none] for him [or for his army] from Tyre, [for the labor] that he directed against her.
19 [Therefore hear this]. This is the word of the Lord *Elohim*: “[Know that I] [am going to give]
to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the land of Egypt.
He will carry away her wealth, [take her spoil] and seize all her plunder. This will be recompense for his army.
20 [And for his payment], for which [he labored there], I am giving him *Eretz Mitzrayim* (the land of Egypt),
for what they did for Me. [Thus there speaks] the Lord *Elohim*.
21 [And on that day] [I will make sprout] a horn for *Beit Yisrael*. [And unto you] I will give open lips [in their midst].
[end melody] [And they shall know] that I am YHWH.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)